'Be Bold, but not Too Bold': Female Courage in Some British and Scandinavian Legends

Author(s): Jacqueline Simpson

Source: *Folklore*, 1991, Vol. 102, No. 1 (1991), pp. 16-30

Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd. on behalf of Folklore Enterprises, Ltd.

Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/1260353

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at https://about.jstor.org/terms

Taylor & Francis, Ltd. and *Folklore Enterprises, Ltd.* are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Folklore*

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Mon, 02 May 2022 16:40:07 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

'Be Bold, but not Too Bold': Female Courage in Some British and Scandinavian Legends

JACQUELINE SIMPSON

MUCH work has been done in recent years on gender stereotyping in fairytales, especially the 'classic' ones from Perrault and Grimm which are so influential—some would say, so damaging—in implanting role models in children's minds. The feminist critique of the classic fairytale heroine points out that she is docile, subordinated to patriarchal figures, and largely passive; her courage does exist, but shows itself almost wholly in stoical endurance of harsh treatment and false accusations, or in patiently accomplishing wearisome but not dangerous tasks, e.g. weaving shirts from nettles, sorting seeds from sand, and so on. Unlike a male hero, she rarely displays active resourcefulness, intelligence, or verbal repartee, let alone physical aggression (apart from Gretel in 'Hansel and Gretel'). Curiosity and boldness, which are merits in heroes, are faults in heroines; any heroine who departs from the norm, e.g. by rejecting suitors or breaking promises, will be suitably humiliated before achieving her happy ending—which is, naturally, to obtain a husband.[1] This gloomy picture, admittedly, needs to be considerably modified when one examines fairytales from outside the Perrault-Grimm canon, or even versions of the 'classic' ones drawn directly from oral tradition;[2] nevertheless, there is a great deal of truth in it.

In contrast, I would like to examine aspects of female characterization from a different narrative genre, the migratory legend;[3] there we find a far more varied range of female figures, whose actions are evaluated in subtle and diverse ways, and who reflect more closely problems and potentialities of real-life women. The situations they encounter are not fantasies, but are accepted as real possiblities within the belief-systems of the communities where the stories circulated. As a first step towards examining how far gender stereotyping affects legends, I shall consider here a sample of narratives from Scandinavia and Britain in which a young woman faces some menacing adversary, whether human or supernatural (robber, ghost, evil fairy, demon). I have excluded tales with an old woman as heroine, for gender roles become blurred with increasing age; the 'clever old women' who so often foil the Devil or lay ghosts seem generally to owe their skills to their age rather than to their sex. Nor will I be considering tales where the plot allows the heroine no possibility of action at all, as when an apparently dead woman is buried but revives when a thief cuts her finger off, or when a mother in childbirth is seized by fairies. My aim is to explore the young heroine's response to danger, the resources she draws upon, and the evaluation of her behaviour stated or implied in the narratives.

Ideally, such an investigation should be based on verbatim oral texts. But these exist only for recent decades, and so could be affected by the changing cultural assumptions of our century. The contrast between legend and fairytale will emerge more clearly if some at least of the legends used are versions from the nineteenth century, i.e. products of the same communities as those where fairytales still circulated. Such versions, admittedly, are generally summaries or paraphrases mediated through the collector's words, and almost always lack context and background information; nevertheless, when one sets variants

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Mon, 02 May 2022 16:40:07 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

of the 'same' legend alongside one another, striking differences of emphasis often emerge, particularly as regards characterization and evaluation, as opposed to basic plot. Hence, a close reading can offer insight into the attitudes and judgements of the original narrators.

A good example emerges from comparing three variants of the Norwegian tale classified by Reidar Th. Christiansen as Migratory Legend 6005, 'The Interrupted Fairy Wedding'. It is always set in the mountain pastures to which cattle were taken every summer, and where women lived alone, or in small groups, in the mountain dairies (*seter*), tending the herds and making butter and cheese. The isolation of these women for weeks on end from their families and communities seems to have generated tension both in them and in people remaining in the valley farms. This was increased by the belief that the mountain pastures were the haunt of dangerous fairies (*huldre*-folk, *tusse*), who might try to lure girls into marriage and keep them captive for ever. From this belief grew a legend, given thus by Andreas Faye in 1844:

> In Numedal there lived a girl who was so lovely that even a Tusse fell in love with her, but though this Underground Man promised to give her a fine farm and much livestock—in fact, anything she could wish for—if she would let herself be betrothed to him, she still remained true to her former sweetheart. When the Tusse saw that he was gaining nothing by fair means, he seized the girl and carried her off by force. Accompanied by a whole crowd of Tusses, he was already on his way with his kidnapped bride to the church in the Underworld to marry her there, when her own sweetheart had the luck to come on the tracks of his vanished bride. He caught up with the bridal procession and shot steel over the girl's head, at which the whole enchantment vanished, and he got back not only his betrothed but also a magnificent silver crown which the Tusses had set on her head.
>
> This crown is still to be seen in the valley, and since it is believed to bring good luck to every bride who wears it, it is lent out for almost every important wedding.[4]

In this version, the legend is a perfect paradigm of stereotyping. The nameless girl is 'lovely' of course, 'true to her former sweetheart' despite splendid offers, unshakeable—but unable to lift a finger to save herself when she is kidnapped. Even her sweetheart only rescues her by 'good luck', which may carry the message that luck, or Providence, can be relied upon to help true lovers; yet it is he who is said to 'get' the silver crown. This still-existing object was evidently of great significance in the development and circulation of the legend, and the coda[5] to the tale focuses attention on it. Not only did it serve as authenticating 'proof', but the fact that it was 'lent out for almost every important wedding' must have been the occasion for constant re-tellings of its supposed history. It is surely no coincidence that every detail in this narrative reinforces cultural expectations of correct male and female behaviour, when it is linked to the most conspicuous item in a Norwegian rural bride's outfit.

For contrast, one can turn to one of the versions Christiansen chose to represent this legend-type in his *The Folktales of Norway,* one which had been collected by P. Ch. Asbjörnsen in the 1830s, only a few years before Faye's version.[6] Here, the heroine, Elli Bakker, is visited while up at the *seter* by what seems to be her own sweetheart, who presses her to marry him at once. 'She stared at him and didn't know what to think . . . "I'm still my own mistress," she said.' It is of course really a *hulder* (mountain fairy, elf), and Elli's dog glares and growls at him. Other elves gather, among them two older, sad-looking women who discreetly warn Elli of danger; they are in fact previous dairymaids, kidnapped from that *seter* years before. Elli, understanding their hints, 'took the dog out to the woodshed, tied a red ribbon round his neck, and whispered, "Hurry home, Rapp!" '

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Mon, 02 May 2022 16:40:07 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Down in the valley, the farmer's wife guesses why the dog has returned alone, and calls her husband; with another man (it is not said whether or not this is Elli's sweetheart) he reaches the *seter* in time to disrupt the wedding with gunfire. As the elves rip off Elli's bridal finery, she manages to save one big silver brooch by crossing her hands over it in Jesus's name—'The brooch is still supposed to exist, for Elli started to work for Madam Schoyen, and she bought it from Elli.'

This is virtually a 'feminist' version. Elli asserts that she is 'still her own mistress' even though at that stage she thinks the troublesome wooer is her own sweetheart, and this rebuff seems to be approved by the teller. (Perhaps one function of these 'fairy wedding' stories was to deter girls from lovemaking when they were unsupervised on the mountains.) She is quick-witted and efficient, twice taking an important initiative: by sending her dog for help, and by preserving the brooch. Unlike the crown in Faye's story, the brooch becomes Elli's personal property, which she shrewdly sells. As for marriage, this point seems not to interest the storyteller at all; it is fleetingly referred to in the opening sentence ('Elli Bakker was up against the *huldre*-folk one summer before she was married . . .'), but ignored in the coda. Instead of celebrating weddings and endorsing gender-roles, this version highlights the vigorous personality of its heroine.

The third rendering of ML 6005 to be examined comes from the fieldwork of Edvard Grimstad, published in 1948. By then the *seter* system was virtually abandoned, so Grimstad was conducting an in-depth study of women who had known it, inquiring into all aspects of their work and incidentally gathering numerous belief statements, memorates, and legends. Among the latter was ML 6005, told as having happened to a certain Anne Rykhus who is described with such particularity that it is obvious that she was a real person; from internal details, it seems she must have lived at least fifty years previously. Anne, so Grimstad was told, 'used to stay out late at pasture, because every evening an attractive young man used to come to her there, and he made himself so agreeable and spoke so persuasively that in the end she agreed to marry him.' But Anne's dog 'knew quite well that it wasn't a real man that came there every evening', and ran off to the farm of its own accord; the farmer, fearing danger, arrived in the nick of time to fire a gun over the bridal procession. But the outcome is not as in the other versions:

> Everything vanished as if it had sunk into the ground. Only Anne was left, and she just sat and stared straight ahead of her. 'How are things with you?' asked the man. 'I want to go home to the village', said she, and began to weep.
>
> He took her home, but from that day she was never like other folk. She used to say that when the farmer fired that shot up there at the dairy, the man she had been about to marry shouted at her, 'You'll see much, but understand little.' And so it was. She could see all sorts of beings which were invisible to others. Sometimes she would see the path so full of them that she would take a stick and drive them away. She could also see things which would come true later. She once declared she could see wagons on wheels going up the valley of their own accord, and fifty years later the railway came through Fron, just outside the house where she had lived. What's more, she declared she could see things like huge birds high in the sky, and some years later aircraft passed over the village. After some years had gone by, Anne Rykhus was no longer considered to be odd, but wise.[7]

In this narrative, the focus of interest shifts as the story proceeds. It had opened with a belief-statement ('The Hidden People tried hard to draw Christians into their world . . . best of all was if they could contrive to marry a Christian girl'), but it turns out that the main point in telling the legend is not to support this belief but to account for

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Mon, 02 May 2022 16:40:07 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

the strange personality and reputed powers of Anne Rykhus herself, who was still vividly remembered in her village. The coda, as is often the case, contains the key to the evaluation of the events narrated, and is here noteworthy for its length and complexity. The evaluation is hesitant and contradictory, for the 'gift' Anne brings home is a very ambiguous one: not a bridal crown for the community, not a valuable brooch for herself, but the burdensome and uncanny power of the Second Sight, which in her case was linked to some form of mental abnormality and eccentric behaviour. So, had she received a gift, or a curse? And if a curse, was she an innocent victim, or had she been to blame? The questions raised by the outcome of Anne's story colour the telling of it right from the start. Far from resisting her fairy wooer, we are told that she rejoiced in his company; indeed, the phrasing, though tactfully veiled, probably implies that she let him become her lover—a sin virtually certain to bring disaster, for in belief-legends (as opposed to fairytales) sexual intercourse with otherworld beings is generally taboo. Though the dog was suspicious, Anne turned a (deliberately?) blind eye to reality. The ambiguity is dramatically highlighted in the moment of disenchantment, when she sits stunned and weeping, yet declares that she wants to go home. There is to be no human marriage for her, cut off as she is by her oddities and her visions. Yet in the long run the communal verdict upon her is that she was a true seer, 'not odd, but wise'; a strange, problematic personality is here being evaluated through a particularly subtle adaptation of a 'standard' legend.

ML 6005 teaches that a girl can, and should, use her wits to escape from danger. But can she also use physical force, normally the prerogative of the male? Here it is instructive to examine stories where a girl finds herself having to cope with robbers (AT 956B 'The Clever Maiden Alone at Home kills the Robbers'; AT 958 'The Alp-Horn and the Robbers', also known as 'The Captive Girl and the Robbers'). There are five such in Katharine Briggs's *Dictionary of British Folk-Tales*;[8] the force used by the girl ranges from simply pushing the intruder out of the door for someone else to shoot him, to stunning him with a poker, cutting his hand off, shooting him herself, or pouring boiling fat down his throat as he sleeps. It may be worth noting that in each case the girl is a servant, defending her employer's property, not her own; this no doubt adds to her merits, at least in the eyes of middle-class storytellers. In the one instance where her reward is mentioned ('The Brave Maidservant'), it is to be kept on as a member of the household, but without ever having to work again—a glimpse of the daydreams of insecure and hard-working maids.

Norwegian and Swedish girl-and-robber tales also have a servant as the heroine: a dairymaid at a *seter* whose dairy is invaded by a gang intent on robbery and rape.[9] The most stable feature of this widespread story is that she eludes them and contrives to blow a particular tune on her alp-horn to summon help from the valley, but in many versions she has first blinded the robbers by throwing in their eyes hot porridge or the boiling water which she had been scalding out the milkpails. Such domestic weapons are naturally appropriate and realistic for a woman to wield; one can compare the many tales where a plebean hero uses simple everyday objects to destroy a monster, which is a matter of realism and/or humour rather than gender role.

British tradition contains a striking group of tales of the category AT 955 'The Robber Bridegroom'. The most famous is 'Mr. Fox',[10] from which my title quotation is taken; its heroine, the spirited and inquisitive Lady Mary, stages a macabre denunciation of her would-be husband by abruptly producing the dead hand of his latest victim, after

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Mon, 02 May 2022 16:40:07 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

which her brothers and friends 'cut Mr. Fox into a thousand pieces'. There are seven variants of this, told as local legends, which were discussed in an article by Katharine Briggs, who named them 'The Hole the Fox did Make'.[11] In six of them the heroine, having gone to a tryst with her sweetheart, happens to hide in a tree and thus sees him digging a grave for her; next day she lets him know, through a riddling verse, that she has discovered his murderous plans. At this, he usually flees, but in one variant, 'The Oxford Student', which claims to be true, he reacts to the heroine's riddle by stabbing her to death. It may not be coincidence that this luckless girl, unlike the others, was no 'innocent' victim but had lost her virginity to her murderer. The seventh variant, from Yorkshire, also concerns a 'deceived' young woman, and one who, left to herself, would undoubtedly have been killed. She owes her life to a farmer who, warned by dreams, found the open grave in a wood and intercepted the girl on her way to the rendezvous:

> 'Hallo!' said the farmer, 'Whither are you going so late at night?' 'And what's that to you?' she replied. 'Surely I'm old enough to know my own business without giving an account of it to you.' 'Come, come,' said the farmer, 'I know now, I think, who you are, and guess your errand. Pray let me tell you what has caused us to be astir.'
>
> She would not believe. They took her to the place, and at the sight of the grave and spade she fainted. The whole party then returned to Park End, and the poor helpless girl, after telling her story of the matter, was only too glad to remain all night under the protection of him who, through his remarkable and providential dream, had been the means of saving her life.[12]

Immorality and rash self-confidence are here punished by a terrifying and disillusioning revelation; duly stricken, 'the poor helpless girl' is 'only too glad' to accept patriarchal protection and rebuke. This group of tales thus neatly exhibits the contrast between what was thought fitting for a 'virtuous' or for a 'fallen' heroine.

Two other 'Robber Bridegroom' tales, of a different type, were known to Charles Dickens from the storytelling of his childhood nurse.[13] In one, the superbly macabre 'Captain Murderer', the heroine contrives a horrifying revenge on the cannibalistic villain, whom she has discovered to have killed and eaten several brides, including her own sister. Concealing her knowledge, she lets him marry her, kill her, and cook her—but takes poison first, so that when he eats her he expires in agony. This is a truly heroic initiative, worthy of a kamikaze pilot. The second tale Dickens gives more briefly; its heroine, a 'young and lovely woman', is a maidservant who discovers her husband to be a notorious burglar, whereupon she 'terminates his career with a red-hot poker', and is commended by Royalty for her courage. Obviously, Dickens's nanny did not have any squeamish scruples about violence being 'unwomanly'; one can only speculate wistfully how many other robust working-class narrators there may have been in nineteenth-century England who did not have the luck to have a future author in their charge, and whose stories never reached the ears of folklore collectors.

An interesting group of Icelandic folktales runs counter to gender stereotyping in a different way, by showing a wife who protects her husband from supernatural danger by her superior psychic awareness and her knowledge of correct magical procedures. This is the more remarkable in that the figure of the male magician (whether good or evil) dominates Icelandic folk tradition to the virtual exclusion of 'wise women', and even witches are rarer than in other lands. In one, a betrothed girl saves her bridegroom from the consequences of mockingly inviting a dead man to the wedding; she foresees the danger in dreams, though he has not told her of his folly, and devises a way to honour the

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Mon, 02 May 2022 16:40:07 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

obligation of hospitality while keeping the ghost safely isolated in an out-building.[14] In two others, a man is threatened by a 'Sending', i.e. a ghost controlled by wizards; he is overwhelmed by sleep, but his wife keeps watch and tricks the Sending into entering a bottle or a bone. 'The farmer . . . says that he had always known he had a fine wife, but had never known or imagined that she was as fine as he now knew she was.'[15]

One duty of women in traditional communities was to keep vigil beside the dead, a situation well suited to be a setting for tales of danger and courage. A story from recent oral tradition in Iceland tells of the death of a priest-magician:

> The Rev. Snorri grew very old. On his deathbed he repented wholeheartedly of his use of black magic in his younger days, and feared greatly for the fate of his soul. Accordingly, he asked his daughter Gudrun, who was as courageous as himself, to watch over his body during the three nights it lay on the bier, and to put three candles on his coffin every night and light them. If any of them went out she was to relight it immediately, for if all three of them were to be extinguished simultaneously, his soul would be lost for ever. His daughter obeyed him, and kept constant watch all these nights. On the first night she was barely able to keep one candle alight at any one time, but on the second two burned more or less constantly, while on the third all three burned brightly throughout the night. By this Gudrun knew that her father's soul was saved.[16]

In this tale, and in two similar nineteenth-century ones about different magicians,[17] the girl is chosen to be witness of the supernatural phenomena because of her reliability and courage, and needs nobody to help her in the task. This contrasts with the more timid heroine of a present-day story from Ulster, who needs the advice and protection of a priest. She is a sixteen-year-old Catholic, working for Protestants:

> One day they were out in the garden sewing, and all of a sudden the mistress asked Biddy if she would sit all night with her when she died. It was an unusual request, so Biddy hesitated for a minute, but not wanting to offend her mistress, she said she would be glad. 'Well,' she says, 'if you do, I will leave you forty pounds in my will.'
>
> Well now, forty pounds was a lot of money in those days, and I suppose you could say, to Biddy it was a fortune. At first the promise didn't bother Biddy, but as time passed, she began to get worried, and to seek advice she went to see her priest. They talked it over, and when Biddy decided to keep her promise the priest said he would give her all the help she needed.[18]

The priest tells her that when the time comes, she must draw a circle round herself on floor and ceiling and stay within it, come what may. After some years the mistress dies, and Biddy, though 'terrified', keeps her word. She remains inside the circle, never lifting her eyes from her Bible all night, though the dead woman calls out to her and then tries to enter the circle. 'It was a long night, one that Biddy won't want to experience again. It was a hard-earned forty pounds.' The narrator, a man, stresses Biddy's good reasons for undertaking the vigil and the support she has from her priest, possibly assuming that it would be wrong to expose oneself to supernatural danger in a frivolous or foolhardy spirit (as will be seen in other tales discussed below). I am uncertain whether her piety and her reliance on the priest should be read as signs of gender-stereotyping; this is an Ulster story, and in Irish Catholic culture a male protagonist too might well be expected to make use of priestly expertise in a situation like this. The contrast with the Icelandic vigil stories, however, does raise the question of whether differing expectations of female behaviour are involved.

In any case, Iceland too has pious heroines. There are two stories based upon the belief that on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve elves would invade human homes while the

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Mon, 02 May 2022 16:40:07 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

household were out at a midnight service; someone must therefore stay at home on guard, but whoever did so and saw the elves might go mad. In these stories a girl, alone in the house, remains resolutely reading a Bible or prayerbook and will not look up from it, while the elves dance and feast around her. At daybreak they vanish; in one version, which appears to be influenced by Cinderella motifs, they abandon treasures which the girl can then safely keep.[19] Here again, the heroine's reliance on silence and devout reading should not be seen necessarily as gender-linked; in Icelandic tradition, men too must remain silent and impassive despite the efforts of elves to break their concentration, if they are to win wealth or knowledge from them.[20] The steady recitation of holy texts, usually psalms, is a standard part of the procedure for ghost-laying in British traditions, despite the fact that the exorcist is always male.[24]

But silence and piety are far from being the woman's only weapons against supernatural enemies. In Scandinavian tradition, it was often held that a human being should never allow an evil ghost or ogre to get the last word, but must match his every utterance with an apt retort; if the creature speaks in verse, then the reply too must carry on in the same metric pattern. Verbal skill of this sort is featured in an Icelandic tale about a girl and a 'night-troll' (a giant which turns to stone if touched by the sun's rays). She is alone in the house one Christmas Eve, rocking a child to sleep, when a troll calls to her through a window in verse, praising her beauty:

Fair seems your hand to me,
Hard and rough mine must be,
Dilly-dilly-do.

Without looking round, she incorporates a reply into the lullaby she is singing:

Dirt it did never sweep,
Sleep, little Kari, sleep,
Lully-lully-lo.

The dialogue goes on all night, each comment on the girl's beauty being met by an assertion of her purity, until at sunrise she curses the troll:

Stand there and turn to stone,
So you'll do harm to none,
Lully-lully-lo.

The creature disappears, but henceforth there is a huge rock beside the path.[22] The girl's repartee has not only saved her life but brought permanent benefit to the community by eliminating the local ogre.

There is a Swedish tale where the heroine is equally imperturbable and sharp-tongued, but where the outcome is less wholly favourable for her; it was collected in 1927 from an informant born in 1852. The girl in question 'maintained that she had never been afraid of the dark in her life', and accepted a dare to go to a churchyard alone at night and steal a knob from the rails round a grave:

Off went the girl straight away. Everything was quite all right as she came into the churchyard and took a knob, but when she had come out again and was on the path, she heard someone behind her calling, 'Are my eyes red?'

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Mon, 02 May 2022 16:40:07 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

'Is my arse black?' the girl replied, and away she went, without turning round. But it came closer, whatever it was that was after her, and then she began to run.

When she came into the living-room at Kantigårn, she threw the grave-knob onto the shoemaker's table and said, 'Well, you can all see that I wasn't afraid of the dark!'

Later, there was a terrible commotion outside. Something was beating against the walls, crashing into the log-pile out in the yard, and shrieking. The girl fell seriously ill and kept to her bed for three days.[23]

The illness mentioned in the last sentence must be assumed to be a punishment, and therefore a sign that the narrator gives a negative evaluation to the girl's behaviour, despite her courage and the aptness of her retort. This might stem from disapproval of verbal coarseness when used by a woman, but it is more likely (in view of other tales involving wagers and tests of fearlessness, to be discussed below) that her boldness is seen as pride and foolhardiness, and thus blameworthy. The punishment in this case, however, is not too bad; she is only ill for three days.

It is a common belief that to speak to a ghost is extremely dangerous, though on the other hand some ghosts cannot speak unless spoken to, and so cannot explain what is troubling them. It is also a virtually universal opinion that women talk too much and are too curious. A cheerful Swedish tale collected in 1892 exploits these assumptions:

There is a proverb here: 'You ask questions as boldly as Vall-Lisbet's mother in Vatlåven.' If someone hears something unusual and asks about it, the answer is likely to be: 'You're doing what Vall-Lisbet's mother did.'

In the course of a journey, this woman lodged at a farm where she encountered a ghost in the stable-yard and began questioning him. Next day she told her host, who replied:

'Awful! We see him at once, as soon as we look out. But we've never dared ask him who he is or what he wants.'

'But don't you see that asking questions is exactly what you should do with that sort of thing? Otherwise they can't say anything. And I asked questions, I did,' said Vall-Lisbet's mother. 'And he said he was your father and wanted to reveal that he had hidden his money-chest in the wall of the fireplace. And now I will show you where the wall is to be torn down.' . . .

Because of her boldness in asking questions she got a barrel of rye, the old man got peace in his grave, and the young farmer got the money-chest, and the haunting stopped.[24]

One even occasionally finds heroines who can break one of the strongest traditional taboos by maltreating a corpse, and get away with it. The tale-type AT 366 'The Man from the Gallows' has as its message the lesson that anybody who steals human bones will be pursued and punished by an angry ghost. In Iceland, however, there is a story about a servant girl who took a skull which had been accidentally dug up in a churchyard and used it to replace a broken oil-lamp; out in the cowshed on New Year's Eve she hears a voice calling, 'Give me my bone!'

Gudrun was not at all dismayed; she picked up the skull just as it was, with the light burning in it, flung it on the floor, trod on it, and said: 'Come and get it then, curse you!' Other people say Gudrun simply flung the bit of skull in the direction from which she heard the voice coming, but did not tread on it. But whichever way it was, no harm came to the girl.[25]

It is certainly remarkable that such calm defiance of the dead and mistreatment of their bones should be approved; Gudrun is not carrying out any duty, unlike the girls who keep vigil by corpses or guard empty houses, nor has she the kindly motivation of Vall-Lisbet's mother. The one and only point of the story is to celebrate her imperturbability.

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Mon, 02 May 2022 16:40:07 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

When one turns from Scandinavian material to those legends in the Briggs *Dictionary of British Folk-Tales* which describe encounters between humans and supernatural beings, one is struck by the rarity of young female protagonists, and by the fact that, of the few that do occur there, only one shows anything resembling the matter-of-fact coolness of Scandinavian heroines. It is also very striking how the narrators find it necessary to explain, in considerable detail, what unavoidable and meritorious reasons the heroines had for being out and about at night, and therefore in a position to meet ghosts. There are only three tales in the collection where women meet ghosts and return unharmed, and each shows this feature:

> There was once a woman . . . whose cattle were seized with a murrain . . . All the forlorn fires and hallowed waters failed of their customary effects; and she was at length told by the wise people whom she consulted . . . [to get] the juice of a dead head from the churchyard . . . [and] that the head must needs be extracted from the grave at the hour of midnight. Being, however, a woman of stout heart and strong faith, native feelings of delicacy towards the sanctuary of the dead had more weight than fear in restraining her for some time from resorting to this desperate remedy.[26]

> Now it happened one of the children living in the house fell desperately ill, and while the worried mother was watching anxiously by the bedside, the child asked for water. The woman quickly fetched a jug of water which was standing on a table near the bed, but the child refused to drink any of the contents of the jug, and demanded fresh water straight from the pump in the yard. The little boy's request caused the poor woman great distress, for it was just about the time of night the ghost was in the habit of walking. While the distracted mother was considering what course to take, the sick child asked again for water, and, bravely suppressing her fear for the sake of her darling son, the woman exclaimed, 'in the name of God, I will go down,' and she walked swiftly from the room.[27]

> The parents were both old, the father was an invalid, and the mother not much better. They had a horse, but it too was old and lame. The storm grew worse, and the sister . . . was near her time . . . This night, prepared as she was for the road, she did not expect to find her sister alive on her return. Her parents tried to stop her, but she argued . . .[28]

All three texts are literary treatments; it is probable that the unmediated oral tellings would have been a good deal more robust, and would have felt less need to make excuses for their heroines. The texts as they stand are redolent of 'Victorian' masculine assumptions; two of the three heroines are timid, and all three are God-fearing and of strong faith—even the 'stout heart' of the woman in 'The Death Bree' is accompanied by 'native feelings of delicacy'. It is she, however, who displays Scandinavian-style boldness while collecting the skull she needs; when a ghostly voice claims one skull as its own, the second as its father's, and a third as its grandfather's, she retorts: 'Well, although it were your grandmother's, you shan't get it till I am done with it.' This 'exemplary courage', we are told, ensured that the brew she made from the skull was of excellent quality and cured not only her cattle but many others in later years.

However, it was not merely literary re-tellers but also folk narrators who held that it was wrong and dangerous to expose oneself to contact with the supernatrual without good reason. It is in this area of motivation that the possibility of sexism arises, for, as we have already seen in some instances, a heroine who sets out to demonstrate her courage or to win a wager about it may incur supernatural punishment (though this is not *always* the case). Such an outcome would imply that narrator and hearers disapprove of female

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Mon, 02 May 2022 16:40:07 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

bravado, an attitude which contrasts with the amusement and admiration often granted to reckless males, e.g. in AT 326 'The Youth who Wanted to Learn what Fear is'. On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that there are many legends telling how a *man* suffered because of rash or insolent behaviour towards supernatural beings, e.g. laughing at working fairies, or lightly invoking the Devil. Legends, like proverbs, offer messages and warnings which contradict one another, but since in practice context and personal preference must have decided which story was told to whom, when and why, ambiguities and inconsistencies in their moral judgements would not have been perceived as troublesome.

The theme of bravado, and of its success or failure, seems to have held considerable attraction for storytellers. Sometimes the same plot can equally be told of a male or female protagonist. There is one classified by Christiansen as ML 4020 'The Unforgiven Skeleton' and by Aarne and Thompson as AT760 'The Unquiet Grave', in which a sinner's body cannot rest in its grave and so is left lying about in some corner of a church as a mere skeleton; someone (man or woman) eventually mocks it or rough-handles it, at which the skeleton forces the joker to carry it to a priest, or to someone it had wronged in life, to obtain forgiveness. Two Danish versions from E. T. Kristensen's collections are cited by Joan Rockwell.[29] In the first, a vicar's maidservant picks up the skeleton for a bet; at the end of her adventure 'she told what she had seen and became very ill'. In the second, a cowman is promised a swig of brandy if he will put porridge in the skeleton's mouth; no illness or other harm comes to him. This might be an effect of gender stereotyping, the woman's boldness being thought more reprehensible than the man's, or her vulnerability greater; however, one would have to look at all known variants of the tale to see if the correlation remained constant in Denmark, for otherwise it might be only coincidence. Certainly there would be exceptions to this pattern—if pattern there be—in Icelandic tradition; besides the Gudrun who used a skull as an oil-lamp, as described above, there is a priest's maid who, for the sake of a pouch of tobacco, carries a bag of human bones from the church to the house, undergoes the experiences characteristic of ML 4020, and returns unharmed.[30]

Again, the tale type often called 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice' but officially classified as ML 3020 'Inexperienced Use of the Black Book' is normally told about a youth, but does occur once in Iceland with a maidservant as protagonist.[31] Her master, the priest-magician Saemundur the Wise, had warned her not to touch a whistle he kept in his bed. Being 'more than a little curious', she blew it, and a goblin appeared. 'The girl was startled, but she did not let it show', and ordered the goblin to count every hair in ten fleeces before she finished making the bed. He failed, so she was safe; later 'she told the whole story . . . and Saemundur was pleased with her presence of mind.' The evaluation is favourable; not a word is said to blame the girl's disobedience and curiosity, those stereotypical 'feminine' faults. But one cannot help noting that when a similar tale is told of a boy,[32] the magician not only praises him but takes him on as his pupil; presumably, education in magic is unthinkable for a girl, and so the maid remains a maid.

Of all the foolhardy heroines, the most gruesomely punished comes from a Danish tale:

> There was once a girl who worked as a servant on that farm, and she had the reputation of being afraid of nothing, not even the Devil himself. One Christmas the farm lads carved a Christmas Goat and dressed it up, according to the old custom. When everyone had eaten their Christmas dinner, the lads said to this girl: 'Would you dare to dance with the Christmas Goat tonight, out in the barn, when the clock strikes twelve?'

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Mon, 02 May 2022 16:40:07 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

'Yes,' answered the girl. And when the time came she took the Goat in her arms and skipped and jumped about with it out in the yard, and then danced into the barn with it, singing:

The ploughman is dancing,
The cowman is dancing,
And I'm dancing too.

She repeated this a few times, but then another voice began singing, and it came from the Goat, and sounded horribly hollow and gruff:

Yes, the ploughman is dancing,
The cowman is dancing,
But the Devil's dancing too,
He's dancing with you!

The Devil had taken on the appearance of the Christmas Goat, for everybody who makes mock of the Goat is mocking at Christmas itself, and they belong to the Devil, which is why he had transformed himself in order to get hold of this girl. So now, having sung this verse, he gripped the girl, and a horrible dance began, with a loud uproar. The girl was uncommonly strong, and she fought against the Devil, but she could not break free. She shrieked aloud, and people could also hear the Devil saying something . . .[33]

Next morning, when people went to the barn, there was a stench of sulphur, but the only traces of the girl were smears of blood and shreds of clothing which showed where the Devil had battered her to death against the walls and rafters of the barn.

The narrator's evaluation here is particularly interesting, since it picks out disrespect to a Christmas hobby-animal as the girl's crucial offence. She can be seen to be at fault in various other ways too, though these are left implicit: her bravado is carried to the point of defying religious conventions ('afraid of nothing, not even the Devil himself'); she goes on dancing after midnight on Christmas Eve, thus desecrating a major religious festival; possibly even the dancing itself may have been regarded as potentially evil, for it is often seen as a suspect activity in traditional morality. For once in a way, one knows something of the context of transmission of this tale. The collector's informant was an old woman who had once been in service at the farm where this is said to have happened, and had been told the story then; she pointed out various permanent effects of the tragedy—bloodstains on the roof-beams of the barn; an apple tree whose fruit was always blighted because the girl's ghost had been laid beneath it; a tendency, despite the exorcism, for her ghost still to be heard rummaging about on the eves of feast-days. It is striking that this story, the most uncompromising warning against a woman's overboldness, should itself come from a woman narrator.

The final pair of tales to be considered here have no type number, but are very closely related; they come from nineteenth-century Iceland and present-day Ulster. The Icelandic one tells how a young boy and girl lived on a farm near a churchyard, and the boy was so fond of playing practical jokes to scare the girl that she was never frightened by anything, always assuming it was just one of his tricks. One day she was sent to fetch in some washing drying in the churchyard and saw, so she thought, the boy dressed up in a sheet and nightcap; she snatched the cap off and took it away with the washing—but 'there was one nightcap too many now, and it was earthy on the inside. Then the girl was scared.' A ghost then appears in the graveyard, and an old man says the girl herself must give it its cap back:

. . . and so she went, though her heart was not much in it, and she placed the cap on the head of the spectre, and when she had done so she said: 'Are you satisfied now?' But at this the dead

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Mon, 02 May 2022 16:40:07 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

man started to his feet, struck her, and said: 'Yes! And you, are you satisfied?' And with these words he plunged down into his grave. The girl fell down at the blow, and when men ran to pick her up, she was already dead. The boy was punished because he used to scare her, for it was considered that the whole unfortunate affair had been his fault, and he gave up scaring people.[34]

This stress on the boy's responsibility is interesting, for it could equally well be argued that the girl herself was to blame for speaking to the ghost at all, let alone being rude to it.

The modern Ulster analogue to this is in some ways the most psychologically illuminating of all the tales I have been considering. The heroine's courage is disapproved of, not (initially, at least) because it involves any offence towards supernatural beings, but because it marks her as 'unfeminine'; to be bold and independent, to this narrator, implies being irritatingly aloof from male protection, and such a girl, it is very clearly implied, deserves to get her comeuppance.

The story is set in Killeavy churchyard and a nearby house where people used to gather to dance and play cards:

. . . and among them was a girl. And this girl lived on the other side of the graveyard, you see? And the boys used to offer to leave [escort] her home at night. She was a young girl, you see, brave and good-looking, and all the boys would offer to leave her home, and at night, and she would never let them, you see? And she would always say, 'I'm not a bit afraid,' and she went home by herself.[35]

So one of the boys borrowed a sheet from the woman in whose house they used to meet, and hid among the graves; the girl, unafraid, stepped over the churchyard wall 'and whipped the sheet off him' and carried it off in triumph—only it soon was proved, as in the Icelandic tale, that the figure whose sheet she had taken was a real ghost, not the joker.

So, eh, she decided then that she was afraid to go past the churchyard then, you see? So a couple of boys decided to leave her home, you see. So she had no objection.

There remains the problem of the sheet, which a priest tells her she must herself take back to the ghost:

'I couldn't do it,' she says, 'I haven't the nerve.' 'Well, you had the nerve to go in,' he says, 'and take it off. So you'll just have to pluck up your nerve, he says, and take—and leave it back. But I'll tell you,' he says, 'what you'll do. Get the lend, if someone is foolish enough to lend it to you, of a—of about a week-old baby. A baby as young as you can get, and take it with you.'

With considerable difficulty she contrives to drape the sheet over the ghost with one hand, while carrying the baby on her other arm:

And when she had the sheet round him he spoke, under the sheet, he says, 'I would kill you where you are standing.' It was the baby that saved her life, and she put the sheet—but that put an end to her exploits in the churchyard!

One can hear the glee in the final phrase. For this narrator, female courage implies an unwelcome, maybe even a threatening, reversal of the right order of things, in which girls ought to be timid, and grateful to boys who see them home. Far from blaming the

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Mon, 02 May 2022 16:40:07 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

prankster, this story shows how everyone concerned—the young men, the ghost, the priest, even the woman who lends the sheet—contributes to breaking the heroine's nerve. It is extremely tempting to interpret the baby's role symbolically, as representing all the burdens of a woman's lot which the heroine must meekly accept if she is to escape from her ordeal and make amends for her 'unfeminine' independence of spirit. There is, however, evidence from Herefordshire, Somerset and Cornwall that a newborn baby or an unborn foetus could, in folk-belief, be used to overpower a ghost by its innocence.[36] The motif, therefore, is a traditional one; nevertheless, its use here fits perfectly with the sexist implications of this tale.

Forty narratives with female protagonists have been examined in this paper, and they prove convincingly that in Scandinavian and British belief-legends of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries female courage can be shown as a vigorous, enterprising quality, and is often a matter for admiration and approval. The contrast with many fairytale stereotypes is very striking. The resources deployed by legend heroines are quite varied. In dealing with supernatural threats they can respond by resolute silence or by ingenious or vulgar repartee, by magical expertise, by piety, by trickery, or by a calm refusal to show fear; even curiosity can be useful. In dealing with robbers, physical violence becomes a possibility; some of the heroines leave this to the menfolk, but others use it themselves, in some cases quite brutally. The moral evaluation does not seem to depend on what action the heroine takes to meet the threat, but on the circumstances which led to her being in danger. If she is at home, or at her normal work in farm or mountain dairy, when the confrontation occurs, then her action in defence of herself or her husband or the property of her employers will certainly be approved. If, like the heroines in some 'Robber Bridegroom' tales, she has gone to a tryst with her betrothed, her detection of his murderous intent usually leads to a happy outcome; in the two cases where it does not, I suspect that in the narrator's mind there was some correlation between sexual immorality and getting murdered. ('She was asking for it' is still quite a common judgement on rape and murder victims.) But the usual reason why a heroine's courage leads to illness or death, and can therefore be deduced to have the narrator's disapproval, is that she has been 'too bold'; in a spirit of bravado, mockery or pride she has put herself into gratuitous confrontation with a supernatural force (often physically intruding into its territory, the church or graveyard), and pays some penalty.

How far can these moral judgements be linked to gender stereotyping? Is there a 'double standard' at work, so that legend heroines are expected to follow rules different from those binding legend heroes? My own impression is that this is not the case; I suspect that one could easily assemble a corpus of tales in which men too are punished for foolhardiness and rudeness towards supernatural beings; even their sexual morality may be relevant to their fate (e.g., there can be evil effects from making love to supernatural females). But to obtain firm conclusions would necessitate a statistical investigation of a larger corpus of legends; mere examination of tale types is not enough, for, as the three examples of ML 6005 discussed above have shown, the 'same' story-plot can be used to convey very different messages. For the same reasons, it is too soon to make any comments on national characteristics; perhaps when the legends of other areas have been published, translated and annotated as thoroughly as those of Scandinavia, bold heroines will crop up in equal numbers elsewhere.[37] I will only note in passing that among the Grimms' *Kinder-und Hausmärchen* there is one, 'The Robber Bridegroom', that has the same plot as 'Mr. Fox', but that on the other hand, surprisingly, bold heroines are virtually absent from the collection of German legends also made by the Grimms, the few examples there being all old women.[38]

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Mon, 02 May 2022 16:40:07 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

What can already be claimed with confidence is that migratory and local legends, as a genre, display a realistic, varied and often subtle portrayal and evaluation of female courage. If one is seeking insight into the value judgements of traditional communities, they offer more relevant information than 'classic' fairytales as to what behaviour was thought admirable in women, though of course their educative influence on later generations has been very much slighter.

9 Christchurch Road,
Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 1JH

NOTES

1. Sigrid Früh and Reiner Wehse, edd., *Die Frau im Märchen* (Erich Röth, Kassel, 1985); Ruth B. Bottigheimer, *Grimms' Bad Girls and Bold Boys: The Moral and Social Vision of the Tales* (Yale U.P., New Haven, 1987); Marcia Liebermann, 'Some Day My Prince Will Come: Female Acculturation through the Fairy Tale,' *College English* 34 (1972), 383-95; Karen Rowe, 'Feminism and Fairy Tales,' *Women's Studies* 6 (1979), 237-55. These two articles are reprinted in Jack Zipes,*Don't Bet on the Prince* (Methuen, New York, and Gower Publishing, Aldershot, 1986), pp. 188-98 and 209-26.

2. Kay Stone, 'Things Walt Disney Never Told Us,' *Journal of American Folklore* 88 (1975), 42-51; Torborg Lundell, 'Folktale Heroines and the Type and Motif Indexes,' *Folklore* 94 (1983), 240-6; Jack Zipes, *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood* (Bergin and Garvey, South Hadley, 1983); Jessica Hooker, 'The Hen Who Sang: Swordbearing Women in East European Fairytales', *Folklore* 101 (1990), 178-84.

3. The term 'legend' is not entirely satisfactory as a rendering of German *sage* or Swedish *sagn*, but is widely used by English-speaking scholars. In the present context it means a story with a structured and relatively stable plot, told as true, supported by authenticating details, and embodying communal beliefs, but which circulates in variant versions. An influential study of the genre, as found in Norway, was R. Th. Christiansen's *The Migratory Legends* (Helsinki, 1958), from which the 'ML' numbering system is taken.

4. Andreas Faye, *Norske Folk-Sagn* (Christiania, 1844), p. 26; tr. Jacqueline Simpson, *Scandinavian Folktales* (Penguin, London, 1988), p. 218.

5. This term, originally used by William Labov when describing structure in personal experience naratives, has been adopted into the structural analysis of Contemporary (Urban) Legends; it designates any sentence(s) which may occur after the resolution of a story, and which serve to bridge the gap between past and present, assert or deny truth, evaluate the occurrence, point a moral, etc. See Gillian Bennett, 'The Phantom Hitchhiker: Neither Modern, Urban, nor Legend?' in *Perspectives on Contemporary Legend* I, ed. Paul Smith (CECTAL, Sheffield, 1984), pp. 45-63; W. F. H. Nicolaisen, 'The Linguistic Structure of Legends,' in *Perspectives on Contemporary Legends* II, ed. Paul Smith, Gillian Bennett and J. D. A. Widdowson (CECTAL, Sheffield, and Sheffield Academic Press, 1987), pp. 61-76.

8. K. M. Briggs, *A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales in the English Language* (Routledge Kegan Paul, London, 1970-1): 'The Hand', Part A vol. I, p. 307; 'The Robber and the Housekeeper', A II, pp. 457-62; 'The Brave Maidservant', B II, pp. 171-2; 'The Cook at Combwell', B II, pp. 183-4; 'The Servant Girl of High Spital', B II, pp. 523-5.

9. A version from Faye (1844) is translated in R. Th. Christiansen (1964), pp. 14-16. Its relatively gentle heroine pretends to co-operate with the robbers after her horn-playing has failed to bring help, and promises to tell nobody of their presence; however, she evades her promise by a trick (speaking to the hearth), and signals to the valley farmers when the robbers are drunk. For a more aggressive heroine, armed with boiling water, see R. Th. Christiansen *Norske Sagn* (Oslo, 1938), pp. 41-2; tr. Simpson (1988), pp. 58-9. For two Swedish versions, see Bengt af Klintberg, *Svenska Folk-sägner* (Norstedts Forlag, Stockholm, 1972), p. 279.

10. 'Mr. Fox' first appeared as a contribution to the Malone Variorum Edition of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* (1790), in explanation of the allusion at I.i.146. It is in Joseph Jacobs, *English Fairy Tales* (1890; repr. Bodley Head, London, 1968), pp. 92-4, also in Briggs (1970-1), A II pp. 447-8. For a variant collected in 1914, see A II, p. 390.

11. K. M. Briggs, 'Historical Traditions in English Folk-Tales,' *Folklore* 75 (1964), 225-42, esp. pp. 235-40.

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Mon, 02 May 2022 16:40:07 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

12. Eliza Gutch, *County Folk-Lore II: North Riding of Yorkshire* (The Folklore Society, London, 1901), pp. 207-8, from a local periodical *The Lord Fitzhugh and his Neighbour Lord Balliol, or, The Parish Magazine.*

13. For 'Captain Murderer', see *The Uncommercial Traveller* ch. 15, 'Nurse's Stories', originally published in *All the Year Round* in 1860. The other tale is in 'The Holly Tree', *Christmas Stories* VIII (1855), pp. 112-13.

14. Jón Árnason, *Íslenzkar Thjódhsögur og Aefintýri* (Leipzig, 1862-4), I pp. 242-5; tr. Jacqueline Simpson, *Icelandic Folktales and Legends* (Batsford, London, 1972), pp. 115-20.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 321-3; tr. *ibid.*, pp. 154-8. *Ibid.*, 336-7; tr. Simpson (1988), pp. 114-15.

16. B. S. Benedikz, from KristínThorarinsdóttir of Ós (d. 1938), in *Durham University Journal* New Series 26:3 (December, 1964), p. 30, and in Jacqueline Simpson, *Legends of Icelandic Magicians* (D. S. Brewer, Ipswich, and Rowan and Littlefeld, Totowa, 1975), pp. 86-7.

17. Árnason I pp. 485-6, 504-5; tr. Simpson (1976), pp. 30-1, 43-4.

18. Linda-May Ballard, 'Three Local Storytellers: A Perspective on the Question of Cultural Heritage,' in *Monsters with Iron Teeth: Perspectives on Contemporary Legends* III, ed. Gillian Bennett and Paul Smith (Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), pp. 168-9.

19. Árnason I, pp. 124-5; tr. Simpson (1972), pp. 55-6. Árnason I, pp. 119-20, from Ólafur Sveinsson of Purkey (1780-1845); tr. Simpson (1988), pp. 186-7.

20. Árnason I, pp. 125, 437; tr. Simpson (1972), pp. 81-3.

21. See, e.g., C. S. Burne and G. F. Jackson, *Shropshire Folk-lore* (London, 1883-6), pp. 124-7; Fletcher Moss, *Folk-Lore: Old Customs and Tales of my Neighbours* (1898), pp. 133-5; E. M. Leather, *The Folk-Lore of Herefordshire* (London, 1912), pp. 29-30; Theo Brown, *The Fate of the Dead: A Study in Folk Eschatology in the West Country* (D. S. Brewer, Ipswich, and Rowan and Littlefield, Totowa, 1979), p. 60.

22. Árnason I, pp. 208-9; tr. Simpson (1972), pp. 81-3.

23. Klintberg, p. 176; tr. Simpson (1988), pp. 95-6.

24. V. Engelke, 'Hälsingsägner 2,' *Svenska Landsmäl och Svenskt Folkliv* 7:10 (1892), 12-13; tr. John Lindow, *Swedish Legends and Folktales* (University of California Press, 1978), pp. 188.

25. Árnason I, pp. 237-8; tr. Simpson (1972), pp. 111-12.

26. Briggs (1970-1), Part B vol. I, pp. 434-6, 'The Death Bree'; from W. W. Gibbings, *Folk-lore and Legends, Scotland* (London, 1889), p. 189.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 593-4, 'The Treasure of Down House'; from J. R. W. Coxhead, *Devon Traditions and Fairy Tales* (Exmouth, 1959), pp. 39-41.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 460-1, 'The Ghost of Farnell'; from R. Macdonald Robertson, *More Highland Folktales* (Edinburgh and London, 1964), p. 41.

29. Joan Rockwell, 'The Ghosts of Evart Tang Kristensen,' in *The Folklore of Ghosts*, ed. H. R. E. Davidson and W. M. S. Russell (D. S. Brewer, Ipswich, and Rowan and Littlefeld, Totowa, 1981), pp. 64-6, from E. T. Kristensen, *Dansk Sagn* (Silkeborg, 1897), vol. V, section A, ch. 55, paras. 895, 902.

30. Árnason I, pp. 306-7; tr. Simpson (1972), pp. 141-2.

31. Árnason I, p. 479; tr. Simpson (1975), p. 26.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 545; tr. *ibid.*, pp. 55-6.

33. Laurits Bødker, *Danske Folkesagn* (Copenhagen, 1958), pp. 147-8; tr. Simpson (1988), pp. 80-1.

34. Árnason I, p. 239; tr. Simpson (1972), pp. 113-15.

35. Linda-May Ballard, 'Before Death and Beyond: Death and Ghost Traditions with Particular Reference to Ulster,' in Davidson and Russell, pp. 34-6; from Ulster Folk and Transport Museum Tape Archive c. 76, 43.

36. Leather, pp. 29-30: a woman and newborn baby were present when twelve parsons laid the ghost of Black Vaughan. Ruth L. Tongue, *Somerset Folklore* (The Folklore Society, London, 1965), pp. 106-7: a pregnant woman was brought by twelve clergy to help lay a ghost, and 'the sinlessness of the unborn child conquered the ghost'. See also Brown, pp. 57-8.

37. Three versions of a Corsican tale with an 'over-bold' heroine are given by Dorothy Carrington and Leslie Grinsell, 'Archaeological Folklore in Corsica,' *Folklore* 93 (1982), 64-5. She dies of fright and is turned to stone, after accepting a wager to go to the church or cemetery at midnight to carry out defiant acts. Some notable Spanish versions of AT 956 and 970 are given in Ch. 4, 'Maidens and Thieves', of J. M. Taggart, *Enchanted Maidens: Gender Relations in Spanish Folktales of Courtship and Marriage* (Princeton, 1990), pp. 59-76.

38. *The German Legends of the Brothers Grimm*, ed. and tr. Donald Ward (Institute for the Study of Human Issues Inc, New York, and Millington Books, London, 1981).

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Mon, 02 May 2022 16:40:07 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms